WESTERN RAILROADER

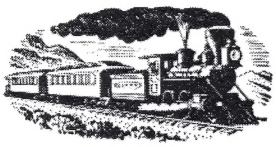
A Publication of the Pacific Coast Chapter, Railway & Locomotive Historical Society, Inc.
FOUNDERS OF THE CALIFORNIA STATE RAILROAD MUSEUM
-&-
THE SAN FRANCISCO CABLE CAR MUSEUM

November / December 2009 Number 692

LOCOMOTIVE 93 - ONE LUCKY LOCOMOTIVE

By Mark Bassett – Executive Director, Nevada Northern Railway Museum

Pictured above is Nevada Northern Railway Locomotive No. 93 leading the westward bound excursion train in July 2009. The train is parked at the Depot in East Ely awaiting the loading of passengers for a delightful westward bound and return trip. On the trip passengers will view a number of historical buildings and mining activity sites. Photograph by Bill Lugg, Jr.



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The following article was taken, with permission by the author, from the Spring/Summer 2009 edition of "Ghost Tracks", a publication of the Nevada Northern Railway Museum.

"Big Engine Coming – Engine 93, the fourth of the monster type in use in the ore train service, will be started from the Pittsburg shops of the American Locomotive Co., on the 15th of this month for East Ely, according to advices that have been received." – White Pine News, January 6, 1909.

Some things lead a charmed life. They're lucky. No matter what happens, they wind up on top. Nevada Northern Railway Locomotive 93 is one such entity; on January 17, 2009, we celebrated the one hundredth birthday of 93.

Locomotive 93 was the last of four locomotives ordered for ore line service by the American Smelters Securities Co. (a Guggenheim entity) for the Nevada Northern Railway. Built in January 1909 at the American Locomotive Works Pittsburg plant (construction number 44604), there is no reason why she still exists, other than luck.

Considered by the White Pine News to be a "monster" locomotive she is actually a midsize steam locomotive. Her wheel arrangement is 2-8-0. That means she has two pilot wheels to guide around curves and eight driving wheels that deliver a tractive effort of 41,890 footpounds with no trailing wheels. A century ago she cost $17,610.

When she arrived at East Ely, she was immediately put to work hauling the ore trains from Copper Flat to McGill and back again. Day in and day out, locomotive 93 hauled the ore trains back and forth.

In January 1952, the other three locomotives that were part of the original order were sent to McGill to be scrapped. All three sister locomotives were cut up. However, locomotive 93 would be different. She was kept as a back-up locomotive. Finally, in 1961, her days on the Nevada Northern Railway were over. She was donated to the White Pine Public Museum where she was put on display; a remembrance of the way it was in White Pine County. For any other locomotive this would have been a death sentence. Outdoors, year after year, with no protection from the weather, she sat. A generation of kids climbed all over her, sitting in the engineer's seat, imagining what it must have been like when she had a fire in her belly, chuffing down the tracks. Little did one small boy suspect that some day he'd find out.

For twenty-nine years locomotive 93 sat through rain and snow – slowly rusting away. Then in 1990, a trade was made. The White Pine Public Museum traded all of the rail equipment that had been on display there to the railroad museum in exchange for the Cherry Creek Depot. Locomotive 93 was towed back to the Nevada Northern Railway engine house. Project 93 was started with the goal of putting locomotive 93 back in service. In 1993, after three years of hard work, locomotive 93 was back in service. Now she began her second career pulling excursion trains instead of ore trains. Annually though, in February, locomotive 93 got the chance to pull the original ore cars back up the hill toward McGill during the winter photo shoots. She added a new layer of cinders to the existing cinders that parallel the track along the hiline.

Life looked good for locomotive 93; it appeared that she had escaped the fate of most steam locomotives, the scrapper's cutting torch. But just two years after her rebirth, disaster struck. As locomotive 93 was heading up through town with an excursion train, unbeknownst to the train crew, a flat car of ties had broken loose at Keystone. Heading to town at over sixty miles an hour it slammed into locomotive 93. The force was such that the tender tank broke free from the frame and smashed into the cab; luckily the crew wasn't seriously injured. The front of the locomotive was mangled and the frame was broken in multiple places, for any other locomotive this would have been the end of the line. But not 93; remember that charmed life?

Any other locomotive would have been cut up for scrap. Instead locomotive 93 was repaired. In two

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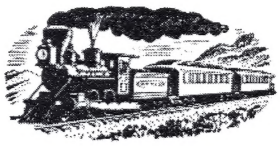

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years time, repairs were complete and locomotive 93 was back in service. She had dodged the bullet again. But, ironically across the country, at almost the same time as the collision in Ely, a steam locomotive in Pennsylvania, had a partial boiler failure. This incident would have major repercussions not only to locomotive 93 but to all steam locomotives in the country.

Due to the incident in Pennsylvania, the federal government changed the rules on steam locomotives. For 93 to remain in service, her boiler would have to be rebuilt. If her boiler was not rebuilt, then locomotive 93 would be taken out of service again – permanently.

As luck would have it, an event in Utah would have major ramifications for locomotive 93. Utah was selected for the 2002 Winter Olympics. One of the venues was Soldier Hollow. There were only two ways to get in, one by bus and one by rail served by the Heber Valley Scenic Railway. The Heber Valley Railway invited us to participate with them to provide steam powered rail service to the Olympic venue. Now the pressure was on to complete the boiler rebuild and transport 93 and two coaches to Utah in time for the Olympics.

Once again, we rose to the challenge and money was found to rebuild the boiler and transport everything to Utah, and another bullet was dodged. In January 2002, ninety-three year old locomotive 93, with a rebuilt boiler, headed out of Ely on US Highway 93 to participate in the 2002 Winter Olympics. In fact locomotive 93 was featured in the Wall Street Journal in the first color photograph that I ever saw in the Journal, talk about being charmed.

After a triumphant tour in Utah, locomotive 93 returned to her home rails and the future looked bright. There was a little nagging problem, her axles were running hot. She became sidelined a couple of times because of the axles. But with a light schedule, short trips and lots of grease, locomotive 93 kept steaming on until July 2007.

Then one day axle 2 ran so hot that 93 needed to be taken off her train and wait for the axle to cool so she could limp back into town. None of our tricks would work. We had to get serious. We dropped the axle and started repairs. Our original plan was to just repair axle 2 and get locomotive 93 back in service. Then, in December 2007, we got hit with another whammy. Cracks were found in axle 2. We could turn out all of the cracks except for one. Now we needed a new axle. Since we found one axle with cracks, we suspected that other axles could be cracked and sure enough our worse fears were confirmed. Axles 1 and 3 also had cracks and axle 4 was on the verge of being condemned because it had been turned so much. Short version, we needed four axles for a ninety-nine year old steam locomotive.

You just don't call up the Acme Steam Locomotive Axle Company and order axles. It appeared that 93's luck had finally run out. In addition to the axles, a closer examination revealed that her entire running gear needed to be rebuilt. A decision needed to be made to either put number 2 axle back in and put locomotive 93 on static display or go out and raise the money to do a complete rebuild of her running gear. The decision was made to rebuild and address all of the issues that need to be repaired. 93's luck was still holding.

On December 27th, locomotive 93 rolled out of the enginehouse under her own power for the first test run. The test run showed that some adjustments needed to be made, but that was expected. On the December 28th, more test runs and more adjustments. The good news was that everything was working as planned.

Finally on January 17, 2009, locomotive 93 hauled her first passenger train up the hill at 1:00 pm. Then at 5:00 pm was the official Centennial Birthday Celebration. Governor Jim Gibbons rode locomotive 93 from the enginehouse to the depot. At the depot, in front of a large crowd, the Governor read a proclamation proclaiming January 17, 2009 – Engine 93 Days. Stepping in front of the pilot, the Governor swung and broke a bottle of champagne on the pilot of locomotive 93, rededicating the locomotive for another century of service.

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LUCKY-Cont'd From Page 3

Kevin Kirkeby, representing Senator John Ensign, presented a certificate from the Senator recognizing and honoring the Nevada Northern Railway, with congratulations for the Centennial Celebration of Locomotive 93.

Also in attendance was Congressman Dean Heller. Congressman Heller presented a Certificate of Special Congressional Recognition for the Locomotive 93 Centennial Celebration thanking the members and volunteers of the museum.

After the speeches and the rededication, everyone boarded the train for a trip to Keystone. Bringing up the rear of the train was a fourteen foot tall birthday cake complete with cannon. Periodically, the cannon was fired off with a bang, just to let people know we were coming.

Waiting for us a Keystone was locomotive 204 with the spacer cars and fireworks car. Locomotive 93 cutoff and ran the wye to turn around for the journey back down the hill. Meanwhile, locomotive 204 coupled her train to locomotive 93's train. 93 coupled back on, the air brakes were tested and now a fourteen car train started down the hill for Ely.

The birthday cake and cannon were now behind locomotive 93. The cannon crew was firing off salvos. Down the hill we came. As we popped out of the old tunnel just above Ely, it was time for the centennial celebration finale – shooting fireworks from a moving train.

According to our research, this was the first time fireworks have ever been shot off of a moving train. The fireworks car cleared the tunnel and the first mortar went off with a BANG! The canyon served to amplify the fireworks. One after another the fireworks were shot off putting on a fabulous display over Ely. To us on the train it appeared that the entire community of Ely had turned out to join in the celebration! The downtown area near the brothels was packed. One person observed, 'they hadn't seen so much activity down there since Kennecott days.'

It was truly a magnificent celebration of locomotive 93's Centennial. It didn't just happen. It was the combined efforts of literally thousands of people. People worked until late at night, while others started early in the morning. Others dug deep into their pockets to supply the cash necessary for the repairs. Through their combined efforts, a piece of White Pine County, a piece of Nevada's past and our country's past, was saved. To quote Senator Ensign, "Locomotive 93 will continue to tell the story of steam railroading in the Silver State for generations to come."

And that little boy, who used to climb into the cab of locomotive 93, and imagine himself as part of the crew had a dream come true too. He was in 93's cab as part of the crew, getting the train over the hill, Locomotive 93 wasn't the only lucky one that night.

Following is a gallery of photos of Nevada Northern Railway Locomotive No. 93 taken in July 2009 in and around the depot at East Ely as well as the yard to the north of the depot. All photographs taken by Bill Lugg, Jr.

Here's Nevada Northern Railway Locomotive No. 93 waiting at the Depot in East Ely prior to it's westward bound run to Keystone.

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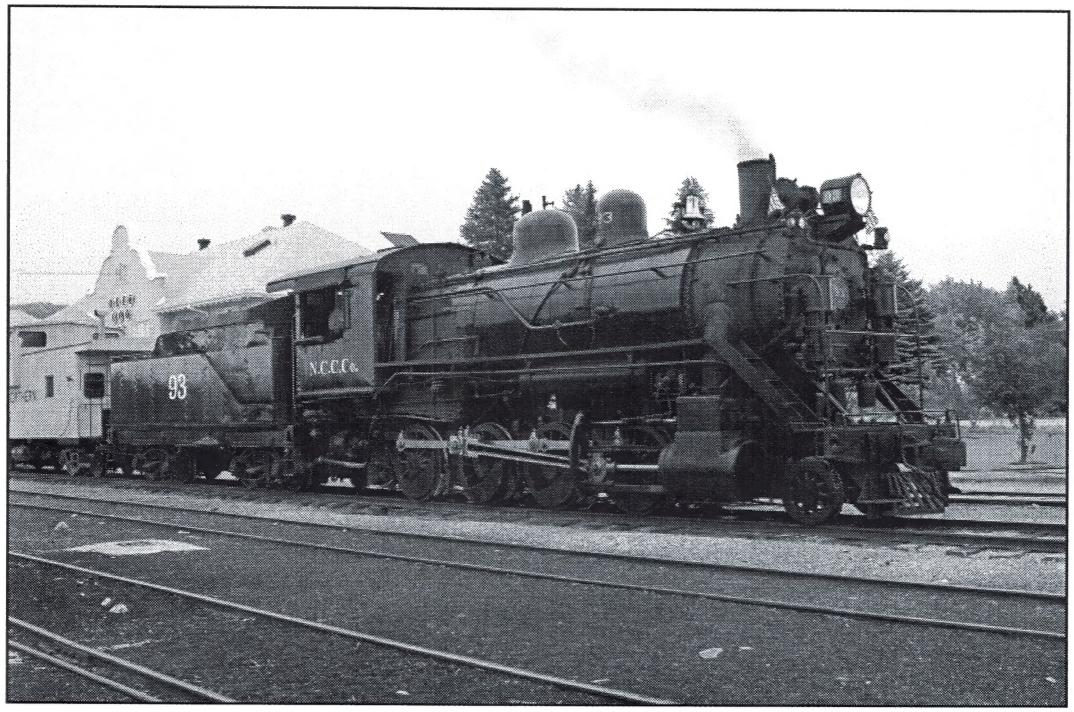
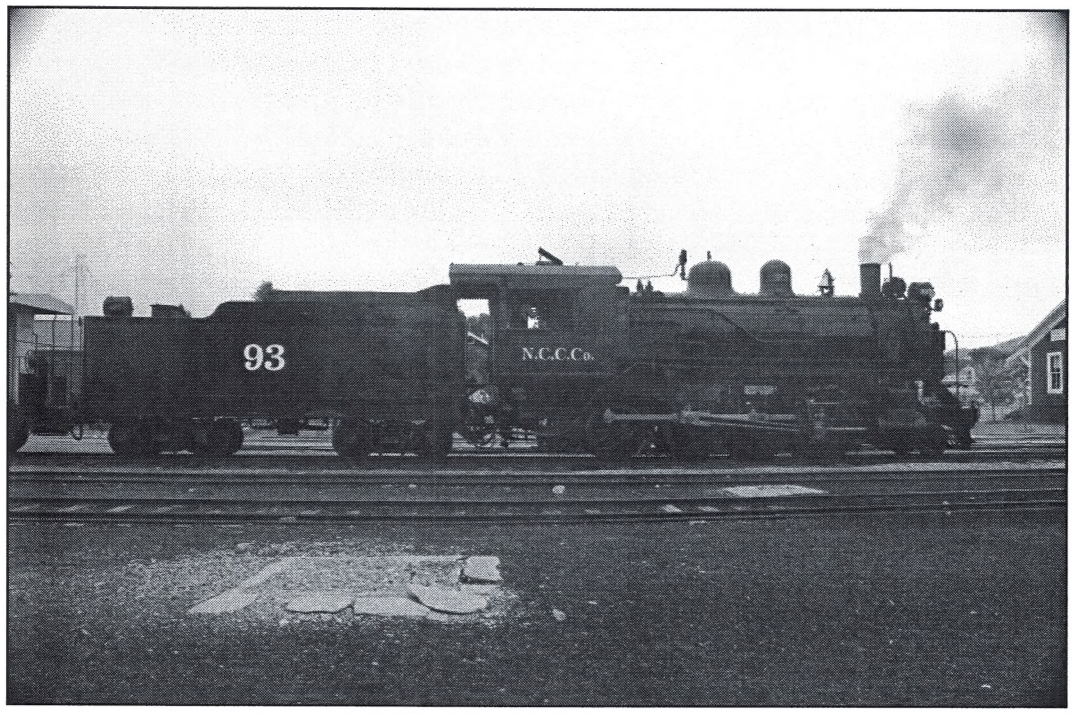
LUCKY-Cont'd From Page 4



Here's another view of Nevada Northern Locomotive 93 as it is awaiting orders to proceed.



View of Nevada Northern Railway Locomotive 93 waiting at the station.

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View of Nevada Northern Locomotive 93 waiting at the station. In the background is a freight shed that was used during the period of time the Nevada Northern Railway operated.

Nevada Northern Locomotive No. 93 has returned from it's westward bound trip and is now making it's way to the Roundhouse. In the foreground is the Chief Engineer's building.

PCC ANIMATES CAB-FORWARD 4294 AT CALIFORNIA STATE RAILROAD MUSEUM.

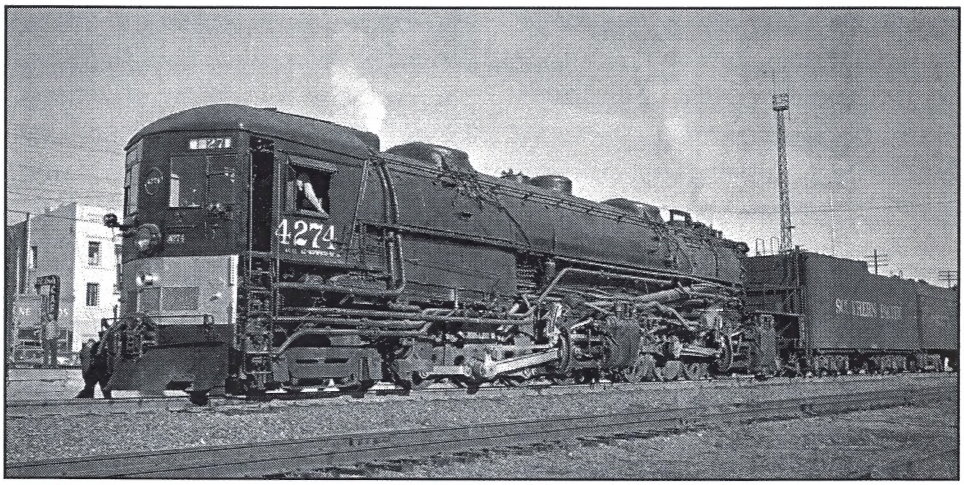
After many months of planning by a few chapter members and museum staff, work culminated in late October with the installation of a high-tech sound system to bring to life the sounds of the huge locomotive simmering under steam. The two-phase project is headed by Director Bob Church, along with Board Chairman Dennis Stefani, members Don Olsen and Warren Haack, and Robert Mistchenko, CSRM Interpreter/Technical Specialist.

Over a year ago the Chapter Board allocated $5000 for the sound project to cover the purchase and installation of a digital system to reproduce the sounds of a cab-forward. The proposal and details were worked out, and an agreement was signed between the two organizations. After installation, the Museum assumes all responsibility for the system.

Member Don Olsen provided original sound tracts for the project. Don is a noted producer of excellent historic steam and electric era railroad videos/DVDs made from his huge collection of movie footage through his Catenary Video Productions. Warren Haack, an audio/visual technical professional, provided his expertise to design and purchase the latest state of the art sound system. The project was completed under budget. Credit will be displayed acknowledging the Chapter's contribution.

Warren made two trips to Niles Canyon when the Pacific Locomotive Association was operating SP 4-6-2 No. 2472. With the cooperation of the PLA steam crew at an early morning fire up, he was able to get excellent digital recordings of the sounds of the firebox/atomizer, the injector, the turbo-generator, the whistle/air horn, and the air compressor. His biggest challenge was to combine a 50-year old tape with the characteristic whistle/wheeze exhaust sounds of cab-forwards with the smokebox mounted compressors. The results are outstanding for two air compressor sounds with the correct exhaust sounds. If you didn't read it here, you wouldn't know it wasn't all from an original cab-forward recording! Out of sight speakers were placed at proper locations so the sounds are heard from the area of each appliance.

The second phase will be to have movie footage from Don's collection showing cab-forwards operating along with close-up images of the different appliances the sound is coming from. The idea at this time is to have these images projected onto a screen on the wall behind the cab-forward, where the wall shows behind the "monkey deck" between the smokebox and tender. Stay tuned in!



Locomotive #4274 cab-forward taken in Reno, Nevada in 1957 near the end of steam on the Southern Pacific. This locomotive is the last numbered cab-forward in Southern Pacific's class AC-11. These locomotives were delivered between November 1942 and April 1943. Picture from Stindt Collection and copies available through Ms. Jan Rodolf (see inside back page for further information). Partial text is taken from "Cab-Forward" a book authored by Dr. Robert J. Church.

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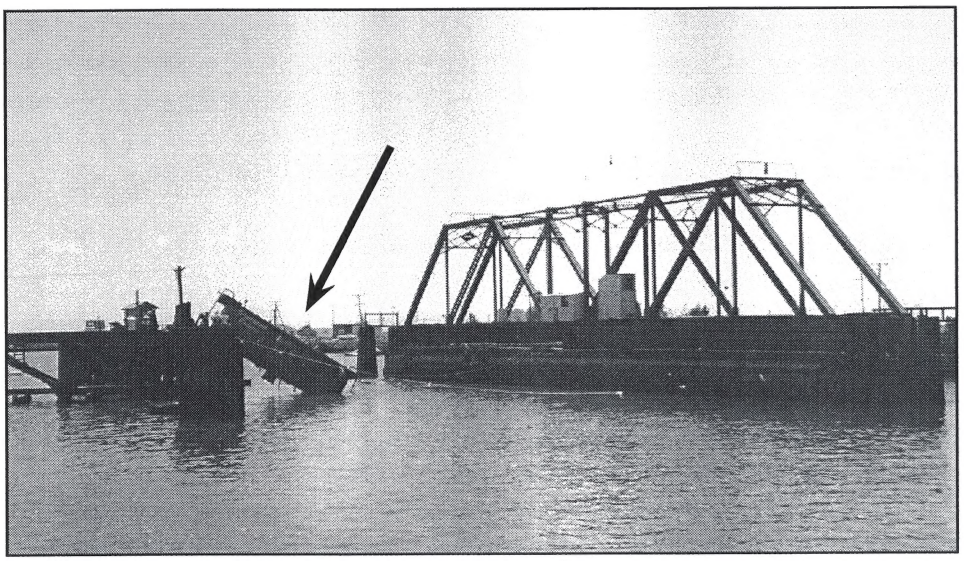
MY RECOLLECTIONS OF THE TRAIN WRECK INTO THE NAPA RIVER

By Donald Meehan



On July 12, 1959, three Southern Pacific Railroad diesel locomotives and one caboose went through a red signal and plunged into the Napa River. This happened about 6:50 AM on a Sunday morning. Our family heard this news on the radio, so my brother and I grabbed the cameras and headed down to the location.

The location in Napa County is at the end of Green Island Road and the Napa River. This used to be called "Dutton's Landing". About the railroad location -- Highway 29 and Green Island Road is the location of Lombard Station on the S. P. RR. This is a branch line from Cordelia, Ca. through Napa, Co. to Schellville Ca. The bridge where the accident took place is a few miles West of Lombard and is called Brazos Bridge, Mile Post 64.7, on the S.P. timetable.

The first locomotive clipped a small pleasure craft moving up river through the opened bridge. The bridge is a draw type which rotates or swings in a circle making two channels for water craft. Three locos went into the river, piled on top of one another. The caboose ended up hanging off the track at a 45-degree angle, with the other end resting on the pile of locos.

The bridge being locked open with locos in river stalled all RR and boat traffic. During the day, the S P RR brought in a wrecking crew with a steam crane and all needed equipment and personnel to remove the caboose. By doing this in one day, they could get the bridge open for RR traffic. This line during 1959 moved a great amount of lumber products from the North Pacific Coast on over to Cordelia on the S P main line.

The crew worked all day Sunday using the steam crane to pick up the caboose and set it on a flat car clearing the bridge. Now the bridge could be closed and railroad traffic could begin. But, the East boat channel was blocked, so boat traffic could only use the West channel.

Two weeks later, 7-27-59, Ben Gerwich Construction Co. brought in two 100 ton floating derricks to pull the locos out of the river. Hardhat divers were used to put cables around units to be lifted out of the river. This was a slow process and took several days. While this work was going on, the river was closed to all RR and water traffic.

My brother and I were able to get slides and movies of some of the progress of this operation, which took place 50 years ago. Ironically, 25 years later, the same thing happened again!! The bridge had been replaced with a new span—lift type—for making a larger river channel for Kaiser Steel Co. to move BART under-the-bay tunnel section down to San Francisco Bay. This accident is documented in a "Trains Magazine" published by Kalmbach Publishing Co.

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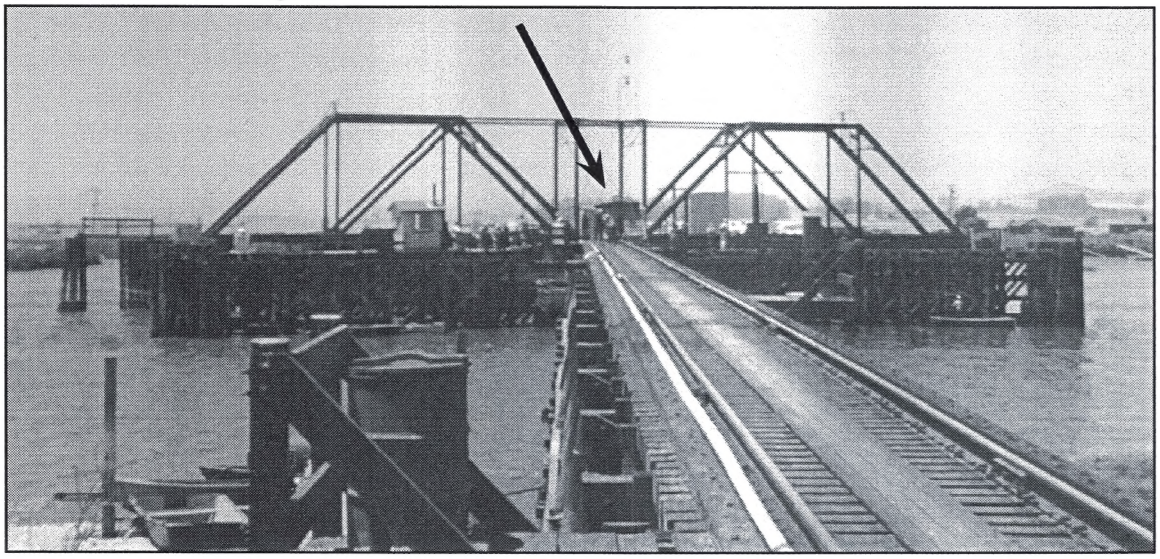
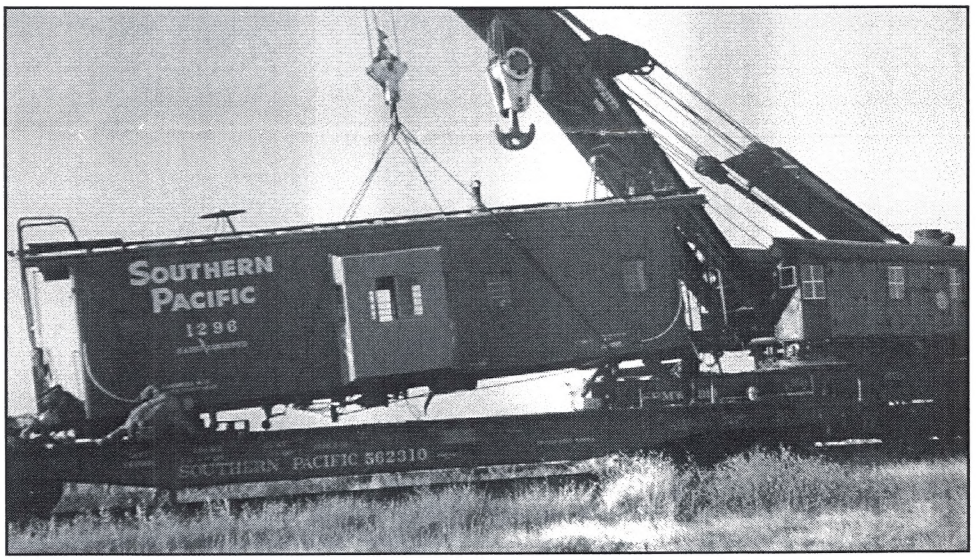
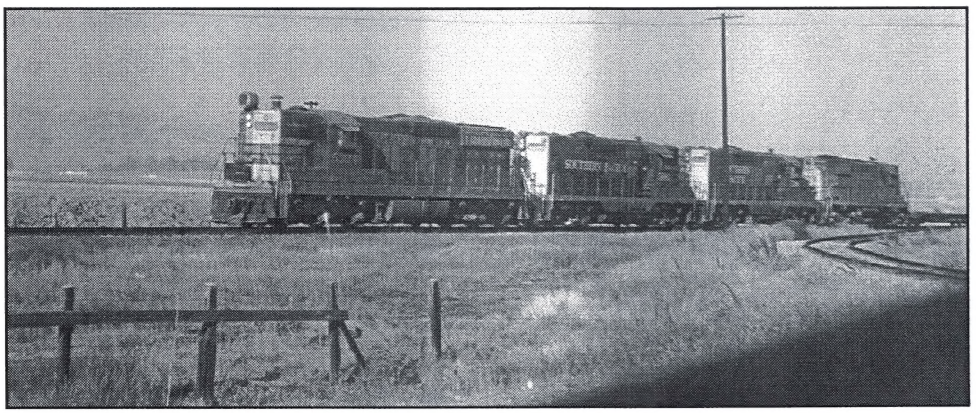


S.P. caboose hanging off Brazos Bridge, Napa Co. Looking West.



S.P. caboose being loaded onto flatcar by railroad personnel



First train, West bound, heading onto Brazos Bridge with a load of empties for the North Coast.

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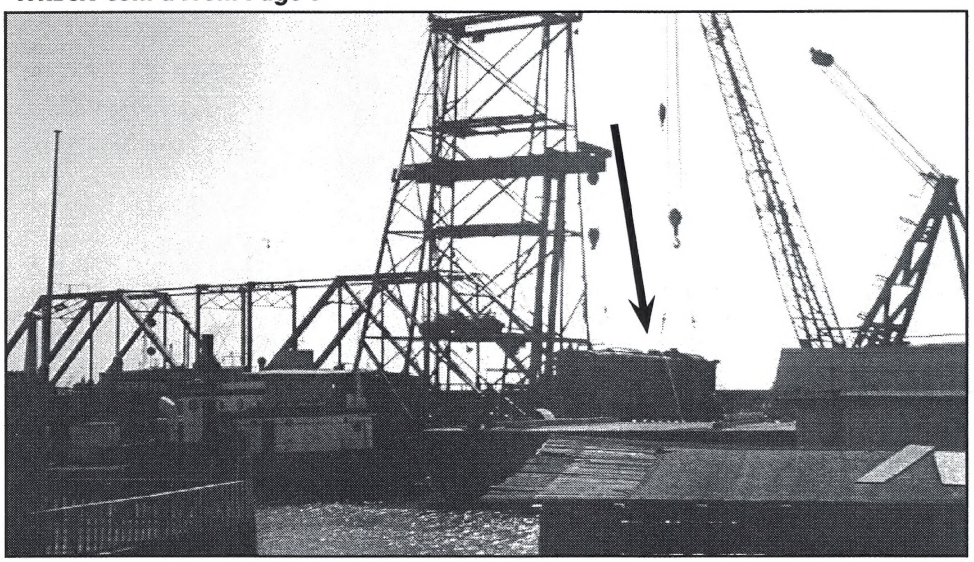
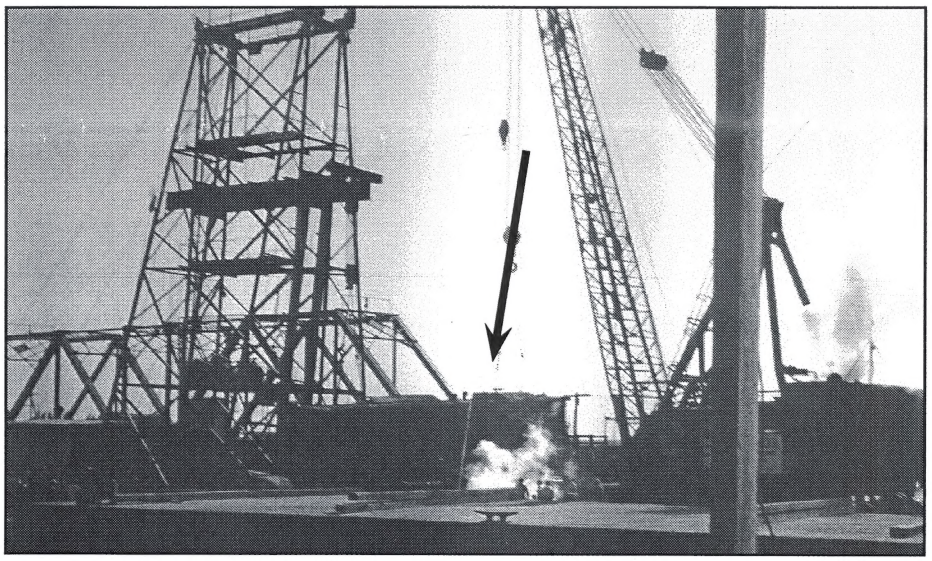


Derrick lifting one of the locos out of the river.



Another loco being brought up from river.

REFERENCES

Napa Register Newspaper 7-13-59

Napa Register Newspaper 7-27-59

Trains Magazine Oct. 1983 (Fri. Oct. 28 1983. Second time in river.)

S P timetable - 10-89

Personal Photos by Mr. Donald Meehan

WELCOME TO NEW AND RETURNING MEMBERS

The Board of Directors and Officers of the Pacific Coast Chapter of the R&LHS wish to welcome aboard new and returning members. They are:

Stephen M. Barr, Santa Rosa, CA

Gary Miller, Puyallup, WA

Pacific Coast Chapter Needs

The Board of Directors cordially invites and encourages any member in good standing to participate by becoming a member of the Board or volunteer to assist in various projects. Board Members meet generally once a month in the Folsom History Museum in Folsom, California, starting time is 10:00 AM and meetings generally last approximately two hours. Discussions include the operation of the Chapter as well as planning for upcoming events and such other items as may come before the Board. Anyone interested in joining the Board or becoming a volunteer please contact Mr. Dennis Stefani by sending a letter to his home at 114 Coralie Way, Folsom CA 95630-3303 or email him at d.stefani@sbcglobal.net.

We Need Articles

Please consider a contribution to the PCC and your fellow members. If you have an interesting photograph or story, send it to the editor, Irene Lugg at P.O. Box 292927, Sacramento, CA 95829-2927 or via email at bilugg2729@att.net. Editor does not verify articles for factual or grammatical accuracy.

Membership Information

Membership in the Pacific Coast Chapter includes all National R&LHS publications, and the bi-monthly Western Railroader, which is available only to Pacific Coast Chapter members. Dues are $52 per calendar year. Checks, payable to PCC, R&LHS should be sent to Bill Lugg, Jr., P.O. Box 292927, Sacramento, CA 95829-2927. Editorial material should be sent to The Western Railroader, P.O. Box 292927, Sacramento, CA 95829-2927, or email at bilugg2729@att.net.

Attention Web Users

Be sure to check our website, www.mp1.com, from time to time.

We plan to update the Calendar of Events in the near future as well as showing more of our photos from the Chapter's archives.

You can email comments and questions about the website to jtrodolf@aol.com. Be sure to indicate mp1 website in the subject line.

The **FRED A. STINDT** collection of negatives has been catalogued. This collection includes locomotive portraits, primarily of Southern Pacific steam & diesel motive power, with some action shots. Prints Are now being offered for sale.

For more information please contact:
Pacific Coast Chapter, R&LHS Attention: Jan Rodolf
5810 Hemlock Street, Sacramento, CA 95841-2308
Fax: 916/344-4325, E-mail: jtrodolf@aol.com

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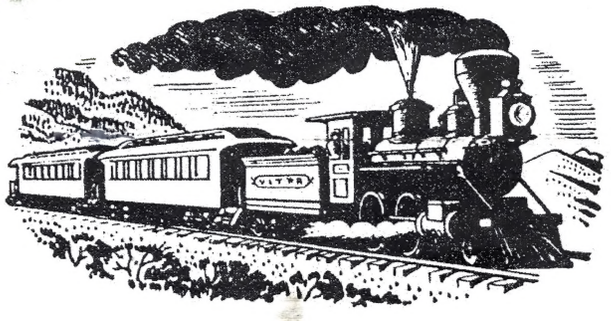
Seasons Greetings



FUTURE EVENTS

February 6, 2010 – Saturday, 12:00 PM – Annual Luncheon Meeting, Spenger's Fish Grotto, 1919 Fourth St., Berkeley, CA. Speaker will be Dr. Robert Church noted author. The subject of Dr. Church's presentation will be "Southern Pacific Across the Great Basin."

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